

Abstracts of Persian Articles

The Struggle between Rostam, the Son of Farroḡzād, and Sa'd, the Son of Vaqqāš (Epic and History)

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This essay aims to demonstrate that the story contained in the *Shahname* of Ferdowsi about the battle of Rostam, the son of Farroḡzād and Sa'd, the son of Vaqqāš is not historical and it was incorporated in the epic as a result of a side story to the battle. The author has edited the *Shahname* text, then by reviewing the historical sources he demonstrates that none of the two generals took part in the battle. Ṭabari's account is important in this regard as it relates that during the third day of the battle a Persian cavalryman engages in combat with an Arab cavalryman named Šabr, the son of 'Alqame. In this battle while the Persian soldier has the upper hand, his horse causes his fall and his eventual death at the hand of Šabr. The author believes this story is the basis of the Rostam-Sa'd story in the *Shahname* and that their names have been replaced with the two generals to fit the epic framework.

The Pahlavi-Kufic Inscription of the Tower of Lājim

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After the Islamic conquest, the Iranian rulers of Tabarestān (Māzandarān) still encouraged the use of Pahlavi language and script. Bilingual inscriptions in Middle Persian and Arabic have been found on three tomb towers at Rādakān, Resget and Lājim.

studied, emphasizing on strengths and weaknesses of the techniques applied, lessons learned, and directions for future work. These papers vividly demonstrate the significance of experimentation with new techniques in the process of conservation aimed at developing methods that may potentially lead to more favorable results.

The volume also includes a number of papers dealing with the issues of management and presentation of remains, highlighting the ways that procedure developed for other sites can be adopted to the grottoes or new ways devised according to particular needs and conditions.

This volume is a fine display of tremendous advancements in the field of conservation work and the crucial contribution it can offer to protecting our past heritage for the future. A wide audience, including archaeologists, art historians, conservators, as well as those with more than rudimentary interest in Dunhuang grottoes and archaeological and historical sites in need of conservation and protection can find much to benefit from in this important collection of papers.

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Corrigenda to Shahbazi's "A New Picture of the Achaemenid World"

In my review of Professor P. Briant's *From Cyrus to Alexander* (*Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 3/2, 2003-4, 69-80), I have wrongly stated (p.74) that a drawing by me has been attributed to Houtkamp. I apologize for the mistake and for the remark (p. 77) drawn from it.

Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road: Proceedings of an International Conference on the Conservation of Grotto Sites, Edited by Neville Agnew, Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1997, xvi + 404 pp., figs., tables, ISBN 0-89236-416-5.

This volume is the proceedings of an international conference on the conservation of ancient sites on the Silk Road, sponsored by the Getty Conservation Institute and the Dunhuang Academy and the State Bureau of Cultural Relics of the People's Republic of China, held in October 1993 at the Mogao grottoes in Dunhuang in east-central China. The goal of the conference was to bring together specialists to discuss options primarily for conservation of Buddhist grottoes on the Silk Road. The conference seems to have been remarkably successful, considering the range of topics covered in papers by a large number of specialists from across the world.

Following the "Foreword" by the Director of the Getty Conservation Institute and the "Preface" by the editor of the volume, four papers provide a background by exploring the artistic aspects of the Dunhuang art, an overview of the protection work at grottoes of China, history of conservation work at Dunhuang, and an outline of the nature of collaboration between the Getty Conservation Institute and the Chinese Bureau of Cultural Relics.

The bulk of the volume consists of the papers presented in the conference. While the majority of papers are concerned in one way or another with Mogao grottoes, there are other examples that draw upon comparanda from sites as far as Mesa Verde in the American Southwest to the Dambulla rock temple complex in Sri Lanka. The papers can be grouped around several major topics: effects of natural elements on remains, methodological considerations of various techniques applied to conservation and protection of remains, and theoretical and methodological considerations of management and presentation of remains. The majority of papers are technical treatise on stages of conservation and protection of remains, including protection against environmental elements (especially geological and climatic conditions), exploring a range of techniques for monitoring environmental changes that may leave a detrimental effect on remains, and a variety of physical and chemical techniques for stabilization, consolidation, preservation, protection, and reinforcement of remains. In most cases, the application procedure and the results in a given site have been outlined and

can be presented. We note that *mazdēšn* (*mzdysn*) is translated with Mazdayasnian "He who sacrifices to (Ahura) Mazdā" (p. 50 and note 8), rather than the more common "mazdean" used in the French part of the book. Skjærvø writes that if the pronunciation was, in the Sasanian age, *mazdayasn* or *mazdāsn*, then the literal meaning of the word could still be understood; instead, if the pronunciation had been *mazdēsn*, this would have been less likely. It is necessary however to keep in account also of the reasonable possibility that the Middle Persian of the inscriptions *mzdysn* did not only represent *mazdēsn* but more likely *māzdēsn*, as recently supported by Prof. A. Panaino (Once again upon Middle Persian **māzdēsn*, in: *Paitimāna, Studies in Honor of Hans-Peter Schmidt*, Costa Mesa, 2003, pp. 321-327).

I point out, in the end, only to a small mistake or misunderstanding in the numbering of the catalogue: at p. 58, under "special features of the Shapur legends", the legend of coin n. 42 is described, on the reverse to the right, as "inverted *šhpwhry* for *NWRA ZY*". However, it seems to me that coin n. 42 carries *NWRA ZY* to left of the altar, and *šhpwhry* to the right, like all the others on Tafel 23, therefore it has nothing peculiar in the legend. In the text the name of Shapur sometimes is transcribed with *Šābwhr* and sometimes with *Šāhpuhr*; it would be better to conform them.

Certainly I can conclude, without hesitation, that this book will be the base for every future study on Sasanian numismatics, and we wish to the authors to keep to this high level also in the next volumes of the series.

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the minting dies. In fact it is a different methodological approach with respect to Alam's. This difference is reflected also in the filing of the material: Alam, in the catalogue, supplies the type of the coin without the epigraphic damages; Gyselen instead reports in the catalogue also the legends in order of position with the damages.

The legend of the coins of Shapur staying, in fact, always the same, that is *mazdēsn bay Šābuhr šāhān šāh Ērān kē čīhr az yazdān* "the divine Mazdayasnian Shapur king of kings of Ērān whose seed is from the gods", can be considered, as rightly pointed out by Gyselen, also a typological criteria, in particular on the reverse of the coins, where the inscription *NWRA ZY šhpwhry* (Fire of Shapur) finds different positions (p. 194). The lack of the titling *ud Anērān* "non-Aryans", as found instead in Shapur's inscriptions, is surprising, but one can note also the differences between the crowns worn by Shapur in the reliefs (without cheek protectors) and those on the coins (usually with cheek protectors). The scholar identifies, with great ability, more than twenty different coin styles, and also analyses a large number of symbols (like the *frawahr*, the symbol of the "Regal heir", pearls, dots, etc. and their different disposition on the coins), but it is very problematic to attribute with safety the different styles to the mints or trying to connect the different styles to precise historical events. The reader sometimes finds himself swamped by a riddle of hypothesis from which it is not always easy to disentangle oneself. Few are the secure mints: among these still Ctesiphon and Hamadān, and Marw (*mlwy*) because it is engraved on the die of a *dēnār* (A51).

Skjærvø's chapter on the palaeography of the coins is worthy of special mention (pp. 46-69), because it is a new study lead with great competence and precision, useful not only to numismatists but also to all those who are interested in the study of Middle Persian. He notices how in Ardashir's coinage there is a tendency to imitate the *ductus* of the rock inscriptions, with letters quite distinguished in their shape; later, already with Shapur, we assist to the gradual inclination towards the deterioration of the care of incision. The letters are often reduced to elementary shapes and tend to resemble one-other and are only recognisable for their position in the text, and the legends are frequently abbreviated and cut with imprecision.

In spite of this picture being not too much of a comfort, it is useful to keep in mind at least of the more frequent variations with which the letters

fact Mithradates I never had a father "god", and Θεονάτωρ is well suited instead to the coins of his son, Phraates II (139/38-128 BC). Also, even the analysis of the dies carried out by Le Rider, *Numismatique Susienne*, Paris, 1960, p. 28, note 4, and Le Rider, *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes*, Paris, 1965, pp. 316-319, seems to exclude that Mithradates I had the title of Θεονάτωρ. On the matter I return to A. Gariboldi, "Royal Ideological Patterns between Seleucid and Parthian Coins: the Case of Θεονάτωρ", in: *5th International Melammu Conference 2002. Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction*, Melammu Symposia V, Robert Rollinger and Christoph Ulf, eds., München 2004, pp. 366-384.

The third phase of the Ardashir's coinage was therefore the longest and the most significant. Also within this mature phase, Alam focuses on typological criteria two different mints (Types IIIa-IIIb), but in this case the attribution to Ctesiphon and Hamadān remains very hypothetical. Still during phase 3 were minted the so-called "throne-successor coins" (VIII/3a). These are copper coins that show, on the front, two facing busts: one is Ardashir, the other was often interpreted in the past as the young Shapur, in a period of co-regency with his father. The authors reject this interpretation, basing themselves on the fact that the legend, in the examples examined, is not totally comprehensible (pp. 55-56). The issuing authority was certainly Ardashir, as clearly seen from the crown that he carries and from the legend on the reverse (Fire of Ardashir). But the identity of the other young personage, curiously equipped with a diademed hooded headgear, stays therefore a mystery. It is very interesting that a special group of copper coins of Shapur (Style Abis) are nearly all re-coined, it seems knowingly, on the type VIII/3a of Ardashir. Unfortunately, also in this case, the identity of the mint is only hypothetical (p. 241). These coins are destined to provoke still a lot of interest. The coins of the final phase of Ardashir (phase 4), with the broken flames of the altar on reverse, constitute, typologically, the bridge of passage towards the coinage of Shapur I. From an iconographic point of view, the novelty with respect to the previous coins is the appearance of two attendants, on the reverse, next to the altar of fire, who are generally interpreted as a duplicate of the image of the king, patron of the sacred fire. However, the coins of Shapur present less typological variations to those of Ardashir, therefore R. Gyselen reverts to a meticulous stylistic analysis of

the second monetary phase that significantly employed two important new mints, understandably Hamadān (B), that had already undertaken the function of mint for the Parthians, and then the capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon (C). Also the iconography of Ardashir changed in this period. His bust, with a long beard, is turned to the right, and wears a hooded mitre with cheek protectors, decorated with a star motif, surrounded with the royal diadem. On the reverse the altar of fire, also tied to the diadem, with the inscription "Fire of Ardashir" (phase 2c). Besides the normal silver drachm, with its fractions, and the tetradrachm, Ardashir also started minting the golden *dēnār*, and this was certainly a spectacular decision, given that the Parthians never had gold coins. Both Ardashir's gold coins and those of Shapur's and their successors are judged by the authors to be purely commemorative emissions, without any real link either to economy or to silver coinage, in accordance with what Göbl supported. I do not know if this "coutume" of thought (cfr. Gyselen, p. 272) is totally correct: personally I believe that it should be changed a little, in the sense that gold could have carried out not only a commemorative function and one of dynastic prestige, but also economical. This is a subject that the reader will find developed in an article of mine due for publication ("The Role of Gold and Silver in the Sasanian Economy", in: *Proceedings of the V European Conference of Iranian Studies*, Ravenna, 6th-11th October 2003), and that I hope will be still discussed in future.

Phase 3 also marks important changes: Ardashir replaces the mitre with a diademed hood surmounted by a high *korymbos*. This new crown, that better expressed the regal *xwarrah*, will be maintained, with some variations, also by the other Sasanian monarchs. Furthermore, the regal titling becomes longer with the addition of *kē čīhr az yazdān* "whose seed is from the gods". The idea of a "divinity" of the king certainly has Hellenistic origins, and travels also through the regal ideology of the Arsacids and of the Fratarakas, with different shades (recently A. Panaino, "The Bayān of the Fratarakas: Gods or 'divine' Kings?", in: *Religious Themes and Texts of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia. Studies in Honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli*, Wiesbaden, 2003, pp. 265-288). I do not believe, however, that Mithradates I (171-139/38 BC) ever carried the title of Θεονάτωρ "one who has a father god" on the coins, copying it from the titling of the Seleucid Alexander Balas (150-145 BC), as is written on p. 99, note 50, but alone that of Θεός. In

weight of the coins. However, because the study of Sasanian coinage is still just generally outlined and presents numerous unsolved problems, like, for example, the organization and the identification of the mints and the deciphering of some legends, the authors have rightly retained it appropriate to go quite beyond the mere compilation of a numismatic catalogue, and have instead dealt for a quite consistent part of the book (the first 289 pages) all these problems. M. Alam has looked into Ardashir's coinage and R. Gyselen of that of Shapur's, but this is a true team work: besides them, P. O. Skjærvø collaborated with a contribution on the palaeography of Middle Persian; R. Linke, M. Schreiner and J. N. Barrandon, with metallographic analysis, often performed for the first time on Sasanian coins. The result of such an international scientific collaboration, obvious also from the languages used in the different sections, German, French and English, could be nothing else but a good result, and the involvement of further researchers is forecast for the following volumes. The authors, keeping in mind all of the scientific literature developed in the last years and also the coins preserved in private collections, photographs of coins published in auction catalogues or the photographic library of the Numismatic Institute of the University of Wien, have thus presented, together with the catalogue, a new proposal for a classification worthy of considerable attention, that will certainly provoke new and lively discussions.

The coins of Ardashir were subdivided by Alam, on the base of typological and historical criteria, in four phases. The first phase marks the beginning of proper Sasanian coinage, from the coronation of Ardashir king of Fārs in Stakhr, until the decisive victory on Artabanus IV, king of the Parthians in 223/24 AD. The first of Ardashir's coins, likely to have been minted still in Stakhr (*Münzstätte A*), picture him in frontal position and with a pearled tiara with, at the centre, a motif that can be interpreted like a sun within a lunar crescent, according to the tradition of some of the Persian kings. Its regal titling is *bay Ardashīr šāh* "the divine king Ardashir"; on the reverse appears the bust of his father, Pābag. Later on (from the phase 2a) the altar of the Zoroastrian fire will appear, destined to remain a constant motif in Sasanian coinage and also in the early Islamic age. The more the power of Ardashir grew stronger with the annexation of new territories, the more his titling became high sounding: from "the divine Mazdayasnian Ardashir king of *Ērān*", to "king of kings of *Ērān*". This was in the course of